

What is CRS?

CRS is an illness of infants born to women who had rubella (German measles) while they were pregnant, usually during the first three months of pregnancy. CRS can cause defects such as cataracts, deafness, heart defects, and mental retardation.

What causes CRS?

CRS is caused by the rubella virus.

Can infants with CRS spread the rubella virus to other persons?

Yes. Infants with CRS can spread rubella directly to other persons who are not immune to the disease. These infants can spread the rubella virus through their nose/throat discharges and urine for up to one year after birth.

How is CRS diagnosed?

A simple blood test involving two blood specimens taken at different times from the infant and compared to each other can confirm or deny the presence of CRS.

How can CRS be prevented?

The best way to prevent CRS is by being sure everyone gets the rubella vaccine. More efforts are needed to vaccinate susceptible adolescents and young adults of childbearing age. The following are some specific measures to prevent CRS:

- 1) Children need to be vaccinated at appropriate ages.
- 2) Pregnant females who have contact with a person who has rubella during their first few months of pregnancy should have their blood tested for rubella infection or immunity and should be advised accordingly.
- 3) Susceptible women should be immunized before marriage and advised to delay becoming pregnant for at least three months following immunization.

Where can I get more information?

Your personal doctor, local health department (listed in your telephone directory), or the Virginia Department of Health, Division of Immunization (804) 786-6246 may give you more information.